

Trifles Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

The play has 3 main characters that spend the majority of the play conversing with each other: the county Attorney, Mrs. Hale, and Mrs. Peters. The play is set in the abandoned kitchen of John Wright's farmhouse. Wright is a victim of homicide, most likely committed by his wife. I would estimate this play to be set in the early 1900s, possibly in the South as well. The unchanging situation is that all three characters are discussing the murder of John Wright and the two wives are recounting memories of Mrs. Wright and the day of the murder.

2. What is the *intrusion*? I.e. What causes the dramatic action to race toward the end of the play?

I believe the intrusion is when they discover the bird and its twisted neck, because that's when it starts to click for Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters on Mrs. Wright's possible motivation.

3. What is the *unique factor*? I.e. Why has the playwright decided to choose this moment in time to move the dramatic action forward?

The unique factor is the dead bird.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that is to be answered by the end of the play?

Is this murder justified due to the possible motive?

5. There are many *forwards* that are designed to raise and hold your interest? Identify a few of them below.

The dead bird with a twisted neck is definitely something meant to hold my interest as well as Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters lying to the Attorney about what they've found and focusing on knotting the quilt or just sewing patches on it.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

The most theatrical moment must have been when Mrs. Hale stuffed the box with the dead bird in her pocket and told the Attorney that Mrs. Wright was just going to knot the quilt. It not only shows a shocking moment of when Mrs. Hale

obstructs “justice” but also brings emphasis and maybe conclusively says that Mrs. Wright did indeed kill Mr. Wright by knotting a rope around his neck and killing him, just like he did with that bird.

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Law vs. Feelings
Justification of murder

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

The Attorney wants justice but is obstructed by the two wives who lie to him about what they’ve discovered. Mrs. Peters wants justice as well, but is obstructed by her own feelings of empathy and sympathy towards Mrs. Wright. Mrs. Hales feels the same way as well.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The bird is definitely one huge image in the play since the bird and its twisted neck is what sets the dramatic action forward in the play. The bird most likely represents Mrs. Wright and she possibly slipped a rope around Mr. Wright’s neck to kill him in order to parallel what he has done to the bird. Another image is the quilt, and how it is woven together to symbolize the two wives weaving together the truth behind the crime done by Mrs. Wright.

The title helps us understand the play, because it’s telling us to look for the little things that will reveal everything. Trifles are objects of almost no importance, but in this play, a bird covered in silk, a quilt, etc., are considered rather important items in the play.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are devoted to their husbands and participate in their community of farmer wives. Mrs. Wright clearly felt like a trapped bird in her home with Mr. Wright, especially with no children to keep her company, which may have lead to his murder.